Black Coalition Claims Nixon Is Avoiding Talks

By Frank C. Porter
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A coalition of civil rights leaders and black businessmen charged the new Administration yesterday with failure to open lines of communication with the Negro community.

It also sought unsuccessfully to gain an audience with President Nixon.

The group of about 40 included such varied public figures as Jackie Robinson, comedian Dick Gregory, former CORE director Floyd McKissick, Marion Barry Jr. of Washington's PRIDE Inc. and Hosea L. Williams of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

They milled about the closed northwest gate of the White House for about half an hour, venting their grievances before a scattering of reporters and photographers. After guards refused to let them through the gate and no White House emissary arrived, they departed.

"We've been trying since December to communicate with the new Administration," said Hosea Williams. "We've just been totally ignored."

"We certainly don't know what he means by 'black capitalism,'" said Dr. Walter Cooper, chairman of the group, the National Black Economic Development Council. "That's what we want to find out."

Cooper, a soft-spoken researcher for the Eastman Kodak Co., said the Council realizes it's a transition Government, that the Administration hasn't had time to formulate programs. All the Council wants is a chance to talk to Government officials, he said.

Robinson, former Brooklyn Dodgers baseball star and now a business executive, acknowledged he is a Republican and had been a Nixon supporter. But he said he believed in the Council's cause and was in Washington to fight for it.

"I think it's high time that white Americans became concerned about black America," he said.

The Council sought the meeting with Mr. Nixon after Howard A. Samuels, the Democratic holdover who heads the Small Business Administration, was unable to give them assurances in a morning meeting about the future of SBA and its Project OWN. Council members also serve on the Black Advisory Council of SBA.

Project OWN seeks to promote business owned by blacks and other minorities in the Nation's ghettos by encouraging the extension of private bank credit through Government guarantees and by supplying advisory services. It has expanded rapidly under Samuels and is very popular with black businessmen.

It was learned from a Government source that a group of prominent Negroes — including Roy Wilkins, the Rev. Dr. Ralph D. Abernathy, Whitney Young, Sen. Edward M. Brooke (R-Mass.) and several black Congressmen—petitioned Mr. Nixon a month ago to continue Project OWN. No answer was ever received, the source said.